(v) MOU with Power Trading Corporation (PTC) for bulk sale of surplus power from existing as well as future units of ONGC.

Private companies in gas and oil sector

†92. .SHRI NAND KISHORE YADAV: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of private gas and oil companies granted permission to operate in various States during the last three years; and

(b) the quantum of revenue Government have earned thereby?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) Since, January 2002, Government have signed Production Sharing Contracts (PSCs) with 9 private companies for 7 exploration blocks & 2 small size fields in various states. Further, Government have granted permission for operations by two private companies for 2 exploration blocks and 1 discovered field through the assignment route in accordance with the provisions of the relevant PSCs.

(b) In respect of the blocks and fields mentioned in part (a) above, no revenue has flowed as yet to the Central Government.

Measures to meet growing demand of Natural Gas

93. DR. M.A.M. RAMASWAMY: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the natural gas is fast emerging as the most preferred fuel in the country;

(b) if so, the quantum of natural gas required by the country to meet the growing demand of natural gas during the coming years;

(c) the steps Government have taken or propose to take to meet the growing demand of natural gas;

(d) whehter a demand has been made to set up a Regulatory Framework for attracting more investments in this sector; and

(e) if so, the reaction of Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR); (a) Yes, sir.

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(b) As per India Hydrocarbon Vision-2025 the demand for natural gas in the year 2006-07 has been projected at 231 Million Standard Cubic Meters Per Day (MMSCMD) which will progressively grow to 391 MMSCMD in the year 2024-2025.

(c) Government have adopted a multipronged strategy for augmenting gas supplies. The major policy initiatives include:—(i) Intensification in exploration through New Exploration Licensing Policy (NELP) bidding rounds; (ii) Intensification in exploitation of Coal Bed Methane (CBM) resources; (iii) Encouraging imports of natural gs in the form of Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG); (iv) Bilateral and multilateral initiatives for gas imports through transational pipelines;

(d) and (e) Yes, Sir. The Government is considering setting up a Petroleum & Natural Gas Regulatory framework for *inter-alia* attracting investments and protecting consumer interests.

Supply of ATF by private firms

94. SHRI MURLI DEORA: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have any plan to dismantle the monopoly of state-owned oil firms in the supply of aviation turbine fuel at Indian Airports;

(b) whether the increased competition with the entry of private players will bring down the ATF prices and if so, the details thereof; and

(c) whether Government have assessed the loss to be caused to the oil firms and if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) The authorization to market transportation fuels, namely petrol, diesel and aviation turbine fuel (ATF) can be given to any company, subject to the company investing or proposing to invest Rs. 2000 crore in exploration" and production (E&P), refining, pipelines or terminals. Reliance Industries Ltd. (RIL) has been given authorization to market ATF, Public Sector Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs) have long been in the business.

(b) It is expected that increased competition would lead to better consumer services, including more value for money.

(c) No formal study in this regard has been done but Public Sector OMCs are expected to hold their own in competitive market conditions.